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BUREAU OF EDUCATIONAL AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS

November 2022

Welcome to the November Office of American Spaces Newsletter!

In this edition, you may notice some new features and formatting in addition to the usual content to which you have come accustomed. Our newsletter will be released for the next few months, as **the American Spaces Programming Team welcomes and onboards its new staff members: Karlene Noel Jennings & Brad Scott**. Karlene and Brad are excited to help develop programs and resources that fit your regional goals.

Karlene is a new Regional Public Engagement Specialist (REPS) and serves as the new chief programming strategist for the Office of American Spaces, based in Washington, DC. She comes to the office from a career in external relations and fundraising for academic libraries. Brad is the new Digital Content Strategist with the Office of American Spaces and is currently based in Doha, Qatar. He has managed technology positions in various locations, including training the citizens of Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia on Internet technologies. His most recent position was in Asmara, Eritrea, where he served as the Deputy PAO.

Our lead story is a journey through Nepal, India, and Indonesia with Director Fred Boll—a photo essay of open doors and the importance of in-person diplomacy. The Office of American Spaces reached 48 million people (in-

person and virtually) in 2021...and through our “**Did You Know**” column we hope to provide more information with a fresh, innovative perspective.

In this newsletter, we would like to share a new toolkit, **Alaska: The Last Frontier**, and highlight **International Education Week (IEW)** content for November 14-18.

Another new feature is a **U.S. Culture** section; this issue, we are highlighting Farmcraft’s latest release.

Hearing from you matters so much—please send us your stories (AmericanSpaces@state.gov)! In our “**From the Field**” section, we would like to thank REPS Paula Kitendaugh for sharing about the World Space Week Fair and also highlight the return of PY351 in Vienna!

And last but not least, do you know a talented teen in need of opportunity? We are helping spread the word about RISE (a program initiative of Schmidt Futures and the Rhodes Trust) that finds brilliant, underserved young people and supports them as they work to serve others. Scroll down to learn more!

Photo Journey: Office of American Spaces Director, Fred Boll, Visits Nepal, India, and Indonesia

I was delighted to have the opportunity to visit American Spaces in Nepal, India, and Indonesia in October, and to see first-hand the exciting vision behind so much clearly creative and effective programming.



I am grateful to American Spaces Specialist **Sulav Bhatta**, who organized visits for me in Kathmandu. I toured the American Center at the Embassy where our Coordinators **Alina Shaky**a and **Guna Raj Dhakal** briefed me on their speakers' program, participation in the regional book club, Tech Camp and skills building programs, and then met with our Book Bus team including **Pranab Man Singh** and **Suvani Singh** to learn about their Creative Educators Program

before seeing the Book Bus in action in Kirtiput where its presence allowed for outreach to all ages at the Communal New Moon Feast, Paru Bhoe. A visit to our iHub Space in Kathmandu with Coordinators **Tshering Tamang** and **Parmita Chapagain**, and meeting with the Director General of our partner organization the Federation of Nepalese Chambers of Commerce and Industry, **Gokarna Awasthi**, was a chance to see teams and partners focused on promoting digital skills and creating digital citizens for today's world.





In New Delhi, REPS **Kathleen Fox** and American Spaces Program Specialists **Sanjay Bhagat** and **Anjana Sharma** were impeccably organized in planning interesting visits that shaped my understanding of American Spaces in that vibrant city. I was pleased to tour the beautiful American Center and meet Director **Chhaya Sharma** and team, including the iHub and NEXUS program to promote entrepreneurship,





seeing our outreach on experiential learning, emerging voices, and to marginalized communities. I am proud to say I now have my own membership card for the Center! We visited the Fulbright Commission where Executive Director **Adam Grotsky** showed us EducationUSA's impressive operations in the capital, and we spoke about how we might link American Spaces even more to EducationUSA there and around the world. I was then privileged to take part in the American Space in Ahmedabad's virtual kickoff of its eSports program.





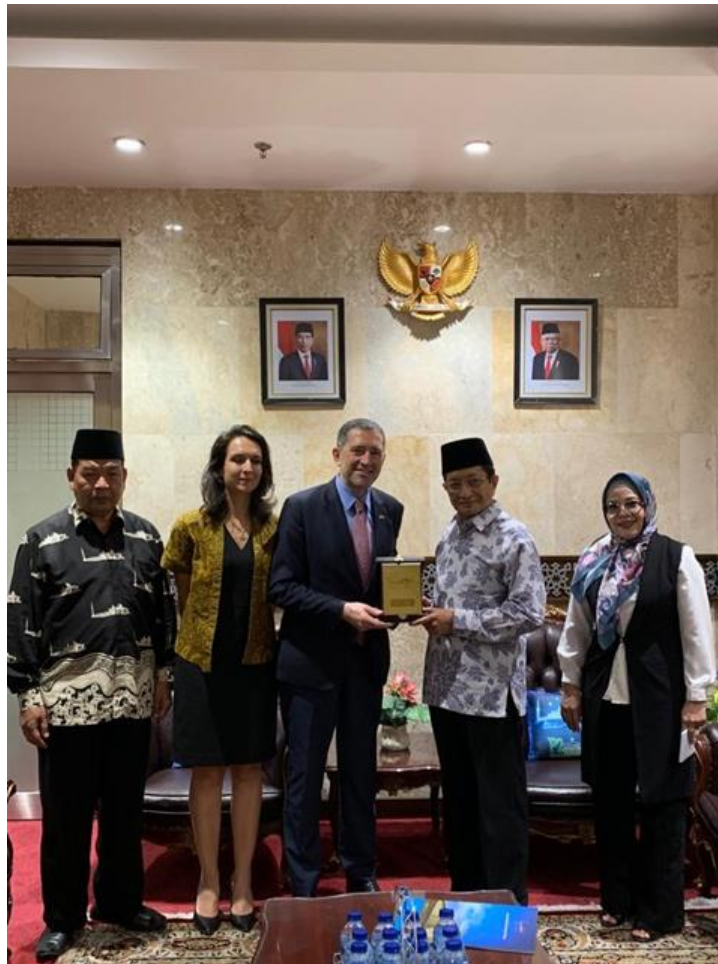
In Indonesia, REPS **Alison McKee** organized fascinating opportunities to interact with Spaces and partner organizations in Jakarta, as well as in Ambon, in the country's Maluku Islands almost 2,500 km to the east of the capital. **Okti Sinaga** and **Endang Nuryanti** welcomed me to the on-compound American Center "MyAmerica Jakarta" where I received an overview of all American Spaces in Indonesia and had a chance to engage virtually with our Public Affairs colleagues in Surabaya and Medan. I had the privilege of being welcomed to the Jakarta's beautiful Istiqlal Mosque by the Grand Imam Prof. Dr. **Nasaruddin Umar** and to discuss post's vision of a possible partnership there. I also engaged with students at the American Corner at the State Islamic University where we spoke about studying in the United States and programs to foster English language learning. I was pleased to meet the University's Vice Rector, Prof. Dr. **Lily Surayya**, the first woman to occupy the position, and the Corner Coordinator **Helmi Hidayat**, to discuss expanding programming. A/PAO **Emily Norris** hosted a dinner for like-minded cultural center representatives, providing us all with a chance to discuss how we might deepen our cooperation on issues

of mutual interest. Attending the launch of the Department's partnership with Google in Indonesia and Vietnam at the impressive @america American Space with U.S. Ambassador to ASEAN **Yonas Abraham** and ASEAN Foundation Executive Director **Yang Mee Eng** was a highlight, as well as a lunch with Public Affairs program partners working on a wide range of issues through American Spaces including women's empowerment, LGBTQI+ community concerns, and entrepreneurship. In Ambon our visit's success was defined by American Spaces Specialist **Christian Simanullang**. Corner Coordinator Kristian's dynamic volunteer corps at our American Corner at Pattimura University was inspiring, as was the chance to engage students there on their aspirations and view of possible study in the United States which was also livestreamed on social media to other Corners in Indonesia. To top off a fascinating visit, post had arranged for a television interview on a prominent current affairs program in Ambon on national broadcaster TVRI, hosted by an alumnus of the English Access Microscholarship program and a former Corner volunteer, **Juan Saquarela**, a sign of how meaningful the Corner's work is.



Throughout my tour I saw how committed and hard-working our teams are, and how much creativity you bring to your portfolios on a daily basis. I also heard clearly about how we in Washington can support you and your needs, everything ranging from avoiding duplication in reporting and ensuring efficient data collection, to how useful and important training is for coordinators, to how we might develop good practices for interactive resources. I appreciate all these ideas and all the good energy our teams devoted to giving me a full picture. I promise that we in Washington are already discussing and following up on steps to address these good ideas.





I am grateful to the local and American staff who welcomed me to every post and made my trip such an enjoyable and productive experience. Senior leaders in all three countries welcomed me, including Ambassador **Sung Kim** in Jakarta, Ambassador **Randy Berry** and A/DCM **Mark Templer** in Kathmandu, and A/DCM **Brian Heath** in New Delhi. All expressed their appreciation for their American Spaces networks and our coordinators' and teams' great work, and their commitment to our platform. I have never been more enthusiastic about our network and mission, as we engage on some of the great challenges of our times, combatting disinformation and misinformation, showing audiences and partners the United States is committed to their and our mutual success, and playing a positive role in combating climate change, fostering entrepreneurship, and defending democratic institutions and the rule of law. My sincere thanks to all of you who made this experience possible.

U.S. Culture:



Fall Farmcraft Training Camp: An American Spaces Exclusive!

Are you ready for Farmcraft 2023? The third round of the global esports competition starts now, with an exclusive Training Camp opportunity for REPS and American Spaces Coordinators to learn Farmcraft “from the ground up.” Expert coaches from implementing partner NASEF (North America Scholastic Esports Federation) will join the State Department team to offer all you need to know about the Minecraft Education-based game, how to develop esports clubs, localize content, game designer secrets, everything Farmcraft and esports. Please visit the [Fall Farmcraft 2022 site](#), where you will find a [Team Guide](#) designed for American Spaces. Registration is [now live](#), and open continuously. Teams and individuals who register for Fall Training Camp are automatically registered (but not obligated) for Farmcraft 2023 - the Pre-Season opens January 2023.

In addition to the prior Farmcraft themes of sustainable agriculture, biotechnology and climate, Farmcraft 2023 will focus on real-world food security issues. Players will not only build farms and plant crops, they will also bring their produce to market.

Here’s the fall lineup:

- Farmcraft game overview and “how-to” download and play the game. Recorded program is available on the [NASEF YouTube channel](#).
- **November 3:** Beat the Creators challenge – [prizes!]
- **November 10 and 14:** NASEF Club Presentations for American Spaces facilitators: On both days, organizers will hold two, hour-long informational webinars at 10 a.m. and 10 p.m. EST for posts, American Spaces and interested partners. **Please email Lynne Scheib (email below) if you would like an invitation to a webinar.**
- **December 1:** Beat the Creators Challenge Due

Got questions now? Please write American Spaces Coordinator
Lynne Scheib at ScheibLD@state.gov

Register [here](#).

General Announcements:

Do you know a talented teen in need?

We are helping to spread the word about RISE (an initiative of Schmidt Futures and the Rhodes Trust that finds and supports global talent in need especially brilliant, underserved young people and supports them as they work to serve others.) We encourage all coordinators to share [this flyer](#) with youth who may be promising candidates. You can learn more about RISE and how candidates can apply via [its website](#).

From the Field:

PY351: Training is Back!



The American Spaces Training Unit in Vienna, Austria hosted its first post-COVID, in-person training course for American Spaces coordinators last month. The PY351 “American Spaces Workshop I” took place over five days from October 17-21 and included 27 participants from around the globe. The trainees, nominated by posts worldwide, represented Locally Employed Staff and non-U.S. government partner staff, who came together to build their skills in strategic planning and programming through active learning and the exchange of best practices.

The participants engaged in various group exercises and experiential learning opportunities aimed at developing their abilities to plan and execute projects in American Spaces, with a focus on audience analysis, targeted outreach, policy-focused program development,

physical renovations, and impact evaluation. At the end of the week, each attendee presented a tailored, country-specific project and strategy for meeting post and global policy-driven public diplomacy objectives. The group was energetic, engaged, dynamic, and enthusiastic, which created a positive and open learning environment. It also led to the development of many friendships and professional connections that will last for years to come.

The Training Unit plans to host additional training courses in 2023; nominees will be selected and notified prior to the training dates. To be eligible for the Workshop I course, nominees must have: (1) at least one year of experience as an American Spaces coordinator (this applies to both Locally Employed Staff and non-U.S. government partner staff); (2) at least 15 hours work per week as a coordinator; (3) successful completion of the *Introduction to American Spaces* virtual course facilitated by a REPS; and (4) professional-level proficiency in English.

Pakistani University Women Celebrate Space and Sustainability



On October 27, the Lincoln Corner at Fatima Jinnah Women University in Rawalpindi organized a World Space Week fair. Student groups representing the chemistry, fine arts, digital arts, math and electrical engineering departments showcased space-themed projects addressing the UN's sustainable development goals. Projects included the chemistry of astronaut food, reducing space junk, working models of radar and a Stewart platform as well as an unearthly call for climate action using sculpture and a shadow-art film.



Students took this extra-curricular project seriously, doing research, working as a team and using the 3D printer, Arduinos, and other STEM technology in the American Space to create solutions and inspire others around the topic of sustainability and space. Projects like this one empower young women to pursue STEM education and career fields where they are typically underrepresented.

Toolkits:

The new *Americana* series is focused on developing greater understanding of different geographic areas of the United States. This month, we feature [Alaska: The Last Frontier](#), renowned for its beautiful landscapes, its mountains and wilderness, its unique cultural heritage, and its wildlife. The state is the biggest, in terms of territorial size, in the union.

ALASKA: THE LAST FRONTIER

AMERICANA TOOLKIT FOR AMERICAN SPACES

This Americana Toolkit is designed for programming at American Spaces to further understanding of the United States.



Reminder: International Education
Week (IEW)

We're looking forward to **International Education Week (IEW) 2022**, November 14-18! IEW is an opportunity to celebrate the benefits of international education and exchange worldwide. This joint initiative of the U.S. Department of State and the U.S. Department of Education is part of our efforts to promote programs that prepare Americans for a global environment and attract future leaders from abroad to study, learn, and exchange experiences. We are sharing resources below that you can use in your American Spaces programming, and please make sure to continue checking [the IEW website](#) for updates and materials leading up to the week of November 14.

As International Education Week approaches, we encourage you to visit the [EducationUSA website](#), where you can find events and advising locations. You may also utilize any of the higher education-related toolkits available in the [Study in the U.S. section](#) of the American Spaces Programming website, including this featured Webinar and [Discussion Guide on Financing U.S. Studies](#), which is an important topic, as funding can be one of the major obstacles for prospective students interested in pursuing a U.S. education.

Thousands of colleges and universities are open for study in the United States, and EducationUSA can help students find the right fit. A recently-developed American Spaces [toolkit on Historically Black Colleges and Universities](#) highlights the importance of these more than 100+ unique institutions. To learn more about the experience of studying at U.S. colleges and universities and to better understand how the U.S. educational system works, learn about the [U.S. Educational System](#).

Did You Know?

Homecoming

Homecoming is a very popular part of United States education. It often occurs in the Fall and is a time when students gather for sporting events, dances, other social activities, and alumni may return to visit especially at college campuses. Homecoming is a point of pride and culture specifically at Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs). For more about HBCU Homecoming, please visit this [page](#) of the National Museum of African American History & Culture.

Alumni Support

Supporting our Alumni is a core pillar of the Office of American Spaces. Recently, Senior REPS Advisor Magia Krause and Program Strategist Karlene Noel Jennings had the opportunity to speak with the Foreign Service Institute attendees in PY344: Alumni Outreach. These Alumni Coordinators shared great examples of how they have partnered with American Spaces and welcome additional programming ideas.

We welcome your stories about how you best engage program alumni!

Calendar of Events

To plan ahead, please feel free to access these resources now for the coming months!

Here's [a link](#) to the 2022 American Spaces Calendar of Holidays and Observances. We are working on our 2023 interactive calendar... so stay tuned; it's coming soon!

November: National Entrepreneurship Month - see [resources](#)

November: Native American Heritage Month - see [toolkit](#)

November 6: International Day for Preventing the Exploitation of the Environment in War and Armed Conflict - See [official site](#)

November 9: World Freedom Day - see [resources](#)

November 11: Veterans Day - see [resources](#)

November 14-20: Global Entrepreneurship Week - see [related site](#) and [resources](#)
(please note the dates on the planning calendar link are marked incorrectly!)

November 14-18: International Education Week - see [related site](#) and [resources](#)

November 16: International Day for Tolerance - see [related site](#) and [resources](#)

November 19: Women's Entrepreneurship Day - see [resources](#)

November 20: World Children's Day - see [related site](#)
(please note the date on the planning calendar link is marked incorrectly!)

November 24: Thanksgiving Day - see [resources](#)

November 25 - December 10: 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence - see [resources](#)

December 1: World AIDS Day - see [related resources](#)

December 2: International Day of the Abolition of Slavery - see [official site](#)

December 3: International Day of Persons with Disabilities - see [toolkit](#)

December 5: International Volunteer Day - see [toolkit](#)

December 5-11: Computer Science Education Week - see [related site](#)

December 9: International Anti-Corruption Day - see [toolkit](#)

December 10: International Human Rights Day - see [resources](#)

December 18: International Migrants Day - see [official site](#)

December 20: International Human Solidarity Day - see [official site](#)

Thanks to all of you who have shared your programming ideas and highlights with your colleagues through our American Spaces FB page. You can continue to share your news and information by emailing us at AmericanSpaces@state.gov. If you have any questions or content to add, email Karlene Noel Jennings at JenningsKN@state.gov.

To add someone to this newsletter, email us at AmericanSpaces@state.gov.



Want to learn about more events in your area or causes you care about?

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